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is the one offered by the Rhodian patriots when the request for arbitration was disclosed (Pol. 28. 17 end). They concluded that the consul must be in a difficult plight and would like to have an opportunity to extricate himself under cover of peace negotiations. This seems to me reasonable. Marcius, as we have seen, knew that he could accomplish nothing by arms. But he also knew that Perseus was ready to offer excellent terms, and that there was a possibility that these terms would now be such as to satisfy the senate. If the senate were satisfied, he would not have to return in disgrace as the preceding consuls had done.

This whole incident is intrinsically of little importance. It has, however, come to be one of the mainstays of historians who look for cunning in Roman statesmanship. It is certainly significant of the bias of our writers that they should so unanimously have accepted a suggestion inimical to the reputation of Roman integrity when that suggestion was self-confessedly unauthoritative and inherently unreasonable. My purpose, then, has been not only to attempt a slight emendation of data, but also to illustrate a protest against what seems to me an unfounded prejudice in the interpretation of Rome's political policies.

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THE SO-CALLED "ARCHON BASILEUS" AND PLATO MENEXENUS 238 D

Plato, in his description of the *πάτριος πολιτεία* of Athens, says some call it democracy and some what they please. *ἔστι δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μετ' εὐδοξίας πλήθους ἀριστοκρατία. βασιλῆς μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ ἡμῖν εἰσιν· οὗτοι δὲ τοτὲ μὲν ἐκ γένους, τοτὲ δὲ αἰρετοί· ἐγκρατὲς δὲ τῆς πόλεως τὰ πολλὰ τὸ πλῆθος, τὰς δὲ ἀρχὰς δίδωσι καὶ κράτος τοῖς αἰεὶ δόξασιν ἀρίστοις εἶναι.* Scholars generally understand *βασιλῆς* here of the so-called "archon basileus." It is so interpreted, I believe, in all the handbooks, and so taken by Wilamowitz (*Aristoteles und Athen*, II, 41), and by Fustel de Coulanges (*Recherches sur quelques problèmes d'histoire*, 159), who argues that *αἰρετοί* may well include choice by lot. It is of course always possible that the idea of the archon crossed Plato's mind, but the main thought and context of the passage seem to require another meaning here. Aristocracy and royalty are for Plato allied, not to say identical, conceptions. In *Republic* 445 B he tells us that the ideal state may be called indifferently by either name according to the number of its rulers. In 587 D the aristocratic and the kingly man are identified: *ἐὰν εἰς ταῦτὸν ἀριστοκρατικὸν καὶ βασιλικὸν τιθῶμεν.* In 543 A the philosophic rulers are denominated kings: *βασιλέας δὲ αὐτῶν εἶναι τοὺς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ τε καὶ πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον γεγονότας ἀρίστους.*

There is a presumption, then, that the "kings" which the ideal Athens

of Plato's encomium has "always" had are wise, authoritative rulers, not those technical survivors, the king archons, whose intrusion here would be irrelevant. Such kings sometimes rule by virtue of hereditary right, sometimes by the election of the people, who, it may plausibly be said in a panegyric, give the offices to those whom they think the best. Similarly, Isocrates (12. 153) says: καὶ τὴν τε δημοκρατίαν καταστήσαντος παρ' αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀριστοκρατίαν μεμιγμένην, ἥπερ ἦν παρ' ἡμῖν, καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς οὐ κληρωτὰς ἀλλ' αἰρετὰς ποιήσαντος. Cf. *Rhet. ad Alex.* Spengel 1. p. 181. 21.

The nominal democracy is thus really a royalty or aristocracy; the name is indifferent. So Thucydides (ii. 65) says of the government of Pericles: ἐγγίγνέτο τε λόγῳ μὲν δημοκρατία, ἔργῳ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή. In the *Politicus* 290 E Plato speaks of the king archon as τῷ λαχόντι βασιλεί, and is careful to distinguish such κληρωταὶ βασιλῆς from the real rulers.

If βασιλῆς refers to the king archon in the *Menexenus*, we have first to ask why the plural is used, and whether αἰρετοί can be appropriately used for κληρωτοί. Waiving these minor points, we then have two alternatives: (1) If μὲν γὰρ gives the reason for ἀριστοκρατία, we must assume that the simple survival of the κληρωτὴ ἀρχὴ of the king archon is sufficient to constitute an aristocracy, and the clause ἐγκρατὲς δὲ, etc., will then have little pertinency or connection with what precedes. (2) The only alternative would be, by a harsh, if conceivable, construction, to take μὲν γὰρ as concessive. This would yield the far-fetched sequence: (I say aristocracy, not monarchy) for though to be sure we always have kings (king archons!), yet the people are masters for the most part, and give the offices to the best men (which constitutes an aristocracy).

Now, apart from other objections to this strained interpretation, there is no reason why Plato should drag in the king archons merely to deny that Athens is a monarchy. Nobody was likely to call it a monarchy. Plato's panegyric paradox is that though most people call it a democracy it is really an aristocracy.

Some further questions might arise as to the precise historical significance of ποτὲ μὲν ἐκ γένους, etc. I take it in the broadest and simplest sense, with no reference to any particular historical epoch. Kings, in the Platonic sense of real rulers, Athens has always had, at some periods of her history hereditary, at others, elective. For the most part the people are in control, and give the offices to the best men, who are then the elective "kings" of an aristocracy in the true sense of the word.

Lastly, a word on μετ' εὐδοξίας, which is obviously not to be taken in the Pindaric sense (Pyth. v. 9), but as L. and S. correctly render, "with the approval." In *Dio Cassius* lii. 35, ἐν γὰρ ταῖς γνώμαις αὐτῶν ἀεὶ μετ' εὐδοξίας ἐνιδρυθήσῃ, it perhaps wavers between the two meanings.